

# Progress of Catholic Rural Movement

"We are on the eve of better days," said his Lordship the Bishop of Ballarat, Most Rev. D. Foley, D.D., at the Regional Conference of the National Catholic Rural Movement, which was held at Bungaree on Sunday, December 1. "Although the outlook is a gloomy one at the moment, and the minds of all are concentrated on the war, there will be grave problems which will have to be faced in the post-war years, and this movement is grappling with the most important of them. All will depend on how far the ideas of the movement can be put into practice. We are entitled to expect a good deal from its members. A movement of this nature is a vital necessity for Australia."

The conference, which was summoned by the executive of the Central Region of the Movement, was attended by more than 250 people. Besides a representative gathering of farmers from Bungaree itself, there were men and women from Werribee, Winchelsea, Inverleigh, Drysdale, Daylesford, Mercedith, Gordon, Greendale, Bacchus Marsh, and surrounding districts. Kyneton, which belongs to a different region of the movement, sent its delegates along as well.

In attendance upon his Lordship were the Administrator of the Diocese of Ballarat, the Rev. E. Galligan, and the Rev. I. McInerney. The visiting clergy included the Rev. J. Clifford, the Rev. J. Lande, Rev. J. Cleary, Rev. Dr. Kissane, Rev. C. Cerini, and some of the Redemptorist Fathers.

The meeting was attended by the national secretary of the N.C.R.M. (B. A. Santamaria), who addressed the conference on the programme of the N.C.R.M.

Accompanying the national secretary were Mr. L. Bartels, of the Victorian Department of Agriculture, and Mr. J. H. Keddie, supervisor of the Victorian Young Farmers' Clubs' Association.

The conference was begun with the attendance of the delegates at Solemn Benediction, which was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church. The delegates were welcomed to the conference by the Rev. Fr. Mulcahy.

Addressing the conference on the programme of the N.C.R.M. for the ensuing year, the national secretary pointed out that the existence of the movement was the Catholic answer to the challenge of the flight from the land.

In 25 years no less than 20,000 men had abandoned the life of the land and the figures which would be revealed concerning this phenomenon in the first year of the second world war would astound even the Australian people, who were used to taking this thing for granted.

Through its National Enquiry, which was conducted by Rural Groups throughout the country, all composed of practical farmers, the N.C.R.M. had found that in attempting to find a remedy for the flight from the land it was called upon to deal with factors of the most varied nature. Although the prime reason for this disastrous tendency was undoubtedly economic—in so far as farming was not a secure vocation in Australia at the present time—nevertheless, reasons of an educational, social and cultural nature were of great importance.

It was clear that even if the economic problem were solved, remedies for

## Regional Conference in Diocese of Ballarat and Movement to be Inaugurated Early Next Year in Lismore (N.S.W.)

these other problems would have to be faced if the flight was to be checked.

The N.C.R.M. was not bound to any particular policy. It would adopt whatever remedies were considered necessary at any given time in order to face the different problems as they came to be dealt with.

The campaign of the movement for the year 1941, on the economic side, would be threefold—the encouragement of independent farming, the spread of

Credit unions would in time enable the farmers to meet problems of finance, while the spread of co-operation among farmers would place the community in a more favourable position in the spheres of production, consumption and marketing.

The campaign for rural education could be carried on at the source—the primary schools—by the spread of Young Farmers' Clubs, in which the State makes available facilities which to the present have not been fully utilised by our Catholic schools.

What the movement could do as the channel through which the expert information on technical methods which was available could be spread to farmers was outlined by Mr. Leo Bartels, who emphasised that there was no other real foundation for solid and prosperous farming than the soil. The soil was the only basis for a permanent agriculture.

Too many Australian farmers were rather soil-miners than soil cultivators. They took from the soil, but returned nothing to it. The rotation crops and the cultivation of pastures were the necessary foundations of rural prosperity in Australia.

Conservatism, which stood against the adoption of methods which enormously improved the productivity of many farms, was one of the main obstacles with which the movement would have to deal, but it was an obstacle which, with consistent effort, could be overcome.

The facilities which were provided by the State for the development of Young Farmers' Clubs in all schools were described by Mr. Keddie, who assured the conference that the N.C.R.M. would enjoy the fullest collaboration of the Young Farmers' Clubs' Association of Victoria in its work of spreading rural education throughout the State.

His Lordship the Bishop of Ballarat (Most Rev. D. Foley) declared that the

flight from the land was glaringly illustrated in his own diocese by the relative figures provided in the two censuses of 1921 and 1933. The Catholic population of the diocese had fallen from 59,000 to 55,000 in that time, and it was not birth prevention which was the cause, but the false attraction of the city.

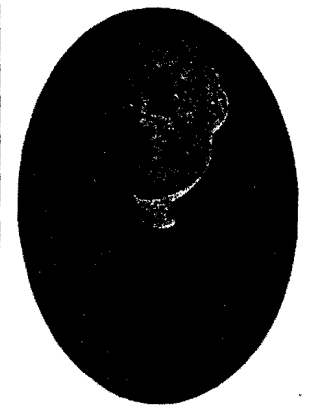
The use of improved farming methods had proved itself in many cases where it had been tried. These methods were the foundation of the best farms which he had seen. He desired that Young Farmers' Clubs should be begun in the Catholic schools not only of the parish of Bungaree, but in all the Catholic schools of the diocese.

The conclusion of the general conference marked the beginning of the meeting of the regional executive. Preparations were made for the rural retreat which is to be held in Ballarat during the Foundation Day week-end.

The election of office-bearers of the region resulted in the appointment of Mr. Denis O'Halloran, of Drysdale, as president, and Messrs. Gargan (Mercedith) and O'Donoghue (Bungaree) as regional secretaries.

### N.C.R.M. TO BE INAUGURATED IN LISMORE DIOCESE

As part of the diocesan programme of Catholic Action in Lismore, N.S.W., it has been decided to inaugurate the National Catholic Rural Movement early in the new year. It is felt that the movement can give a solution to many of the economic and social problems of the man on the land, of farmers in general, and of Catholic farmers in particular. To do this the movement appeals for the wholehearted support and lively interest of the Catholic farmers of the diocese. With such support and interest the movement will be able to do something worth while, and attain to a real standing in the community. His Lordship Bishop Carroll has convened a conference of farmers from Lismore parish and the surrounding parishes of South Lismore, Casino, Wardell, Ballina, Bangalow, Mullumbimby, Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads, Kyogle, Goolmangar, Coraki, Maclean, Cowper, Grafton and South Grafton, to meet at St. John's College, Woodlawn, early in the new year (date yet to be fixed). In the meantime an urgent recommendation is made that preparation should be commenced. Literature is being supplied by the National Secretariat of Catholic Action, and is available in the parishes mentioned.



HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF BALLARAT, MOST REV. D. FOLEY, D.D., who addressed delegates to the Regional Conference of the National Catholic Rural Movement at Bungaree on Sunday

credit unions, and the stimulation of co-operative enterprise in country districts.

Independent farming would face up to the fact that the prime reason why 80% of the farmers of Australia were in the hands of the financial institutions was that they relied on specialised farming, and its corollary of the export market, which was about as unreliable as anything could be.

## Society of Jesus Has 26,309 Members

The Society of Jesus has 26,309 members in 1531 houses, divided into fifty provinces and vice-provinces throughout the world.

These figures are given in the "Civiltà Cattolica," organ of the Jesuits in Rome, in connection with the Apostolic Letter which his Holiness Pope Pius XII. has addressed to the Society of Jesus on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the canonical approbation of the society.

The article, written by the Rev. C. Martegani, S.J., also states that in 1938 Jesuits conducted retreats for more than 750,000 priests, Sisters, other religious and lay persons. Its Apostolate of Prayer, the article says, counts 125,787 centres, with about 35,000,000 members and 72 periodicals printed in 44 languages.

Further figures given in the summary are:

Sodalities under the direction of Jesuits, 67,117, with 5,600,000 sodalists; 3500 Jesuits employed in education in 15 universities and 421 schools of college and secondary grade with 140,000 pupils; 3785 Jesuit

missionaries in 54 missions, caring for 3,000,000 Catholics and 300,000 catechumens; 15 universities and colleges in Jesuit missions with 9000 students; 169 secondary schools with more than 50,000 pupils, 67 normal schools and schools for catechists with 2300 students; 83 industrial schools with 4500 pupils; 7818 elementary schools with nearly 400,000 children; 155 orphanages with 13,000 children; 40 seminaries with 3000 students.

In the field of the press, the article declares, the Jesuits have been notably active. In the Catholic Press Exhibition in Vatican City in 1936-'37 there were on exhibit 1112 magazines edited by the Jesuits, 26 of which were generally cultural and 152 concerned with higher studies and scientific research. The index of Jesuit writings for 1938 alone shows a total figure of 2468.

The society's record of sanctity is as impressive as that of its spiritual, cultural and educational works. After four centuries of existence the society can count 24 of its members who have been canonised, 12 of them martyrs; 141 beatified, of whom 136 were martyrs; and 185 who have received the degree of "Venerable" and whose causes are now being promoted.

The article also points out that it is the society's distinction of having given North America's first saints.

### The Assisian Guild

The monthly meeting of the Assisian Guild was held at St. Francis' Hall on Friday last, and a large attendance of members dealt with a particularly full and important programme of business.

The syllabus item, a lecture by Mr. Frank Leech on "Eastern Experiences and Their Lessons," was of outstanding merit, and members were enthusiastic in their appreciation of a rather unique address.

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